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l. An addition copolymer composed of

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- a) from 30 to 79.5% by weight of N-vinylpyrrolidone
- b) from 20 to 69.5% by weight of vinyl acetate
- c) from 0.5 to 25% by weight of a monovinyl ester of a C_4 to C_{20} monocarboxylic acid
- d) from 0 to 40% by weight of a further, copolymerizable, ethylenically unsaturated compound,

the percentages by weight in each case being based on the said copolymer.

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- 2. A copolymer as claimed in claim 1, wherein c) comprises the monovinyl ester of a branched monocarboxylic acid having at least one tertiary or quaternary carbon atom.
- 20 3. A copolymer as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein c) comprises the monovinyl ester of a C_5 to C_{15} monocarboxylic acid.
 - 4. A copolymer as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein c) comprises the monovinyl ester of a Versatic acid.

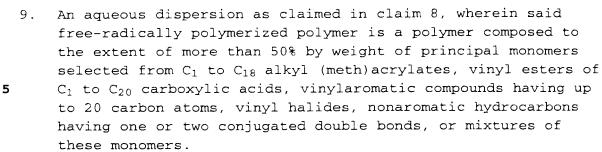
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- 5. An aqueous solution or dispersion of the copolymer as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4.
- 6. The use of a copolymer or of its aqueous solution or dispersion, as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, as a thickener for an aqueous polymer dispersion.
 - 7. An aqueous polymer dispersion comprising as thickener a copolymer as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4.

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8. An aqueous dispersion as claimed in claim 6, which comprises a dispersion of a free-radically polymerized polymer, of a polyester or of a polyurethane.

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10 10. An aqueous dispersion as claimed in any of claims 7 to 9, containing from 0.2 to 20 parts by weight of the thickening copolymer per 100 parts by weight of the dispersed polymer.